

CEAC Minutes

May 17, 2022

Members: **Hannah Jenkins**, Max Dalton, Indigo Davitt- Liu, **Meron Demissie**, **Mark Dhennin**, Tess Dornfeld, Divine Islam, **Mathew Douglas-May**, **Sandy Fazeli**, **Lauren Fleming**, **Maddie Henderson**, **LesLee Jackson**, Anna Johnson, **Toya Lopez**, **Barbara Lunde**, Nicholas Minderman, **Erin Niehoff**, Suzanne Savanick Hansen, **Jaqueline Zepeda** (Quorum: 10) **Those in attendance are in bold**

Guests: Davy Schmitz, Mike McDonough, Susan Hunter Weir

Staff: Bjorn Olson, Stacy Miller

Quorum met.

Chair Sandy Fazeli called the meeting to order at 5:11.

Call To Order

1. Roll Call.
Adoption of the agenda.
Acceptance of [Apr 12, 2022 Community Environmental Advisory Commission](#) minutes

Consent

2. Land Acknowledgement: As we meet here today, we are reminded that Minneapolis is situated on the homelands of the Dakota people. An area that is steeped in rich Indigenous history, it is home to Indigenous people from more than 30 different nations. As a City, we have a responsibility to care for the land on which we live and work and all its natural surroundings. This stewardship is an integral part of our involvement in this commission, and we honor it as we begin our meeting. We now open this space to discuss ways in which we can support Indigenous people in our community.

LesLee Jackson announced an extension of the billboard contest.

Erin Niehoff reminded the group the Minneapolis Community Connections Conference is this Saturday.

Following the Land Acknowledgement, Commissioner Tess Dornfeld could not attend but shared the [calendar of events](#) for Indigenous People's Month from the Hennepin County Library.

Discussion

3. [635 Van Buren Street Development Update](#)

The project has been approved by the BHIZ Committee

Feedback and thoughts on recommendation letter re: decarbonizing lawn equipment incentive program

The letter of CEAC support for programs and policies to decarbonize lawn equipment in Minneapolis was sent to the Mayor's Office and City Council by Chair Johnson.

Feedback and thoughts on letter re: Mayor Frey's Hiawatha Project veto

Commissioner Leslee Jackson offered an update on the Green Zone Summit agenda, [volunteer opportunities](#), and billboard contest update. See [Green Zones Summit 2022 flyer](#)

Commissioner Niehoff shared that Open Streets 2022 [registration](#) is now open.

Opportunities to support Hennepin County Sustainability efforts.

On behalf of sustainability staff Kelly Muellman, Bjorn Olson invited CEAC members to attend the Green Zones Summit on Saturday, May 21. The Green Zones welcome the opportunity to build relationships across boards and commissions.

Bjorn highlighted plans to update the Climate Action and Equity Plan. A website is being developed for the public to learn more and opportunities to engage. Bjorn invited commissioners to [sign up](#) for the sustainability newsletter where updates will be available.

Presentation

4. Pioneers and Soldiers Cemetery Native Planting and Grazer Proposal – Davy Schmitz, Great River Greening

[This link open a new window Pioneers and Soldiers Enhancement Presentation to CEAC 5.22](#)

[This link open a new window Community Environmental Advisory Commission SHW Letter](#)

Great River Greening is a conservation organization specializing in native habitat restoration.

Mr. Schmitz presented on the opportunity to support a state appropriation for the purpose of planting native habitat and possible grazing plan at the 21-acre Pioneers and Soldiers Cemetery at Cedar and Lake Streets; the oldest cemetery in Minneapolis and on National Register of Historic Places.

- The proposed plan includes modification of a portion of existing turf and plants to native prairie vegetation to sequester additional carbon and create habitat for native bees and pollinators.
- Possibility for grazing animals in 3 of 6 areas to reduce need for mowing.
- Animals would graze for 3-5 days at a time, contained by electric fencing.
- Great River Greening is proposing the plan to the legislature for an appropriation and seeking support from CEAC

Sue Hunter, Chair Friends of the Cemetery

Guest Sue Hunter volunteers at the cemetery and attended the meeting to express concern about the Great River Greening plan. She noted that:

- There are 22,000 graves at the cemetery; 15,551 graves in the area planned for cultivation.
- The graves belong to the families of the deceased buried there, who paid for the graves and own them.
- Friends of the Cemetery have raised \$2M in donations but don't want grant money, including appropriations from the state, because it could impact the culture of the volunteer organization.
- Two resident deer and other wildlife reside there.
- The volunteers work with Daughters of the Revolution, Adults with Disabilities and others; Currently speaking with MIGIZI about youth planting native herbs and flowers

Discussion followed:

Q: Is there any concern about the impact on wildlife from grazers and also the protection of the grazers from people who could harm them on the cemetery?

A: Yes, per Guest Sue Hunter.

Comment: Perhaps Great River Greening could work with the Friends of the Cemetery on the plan.

Comment: We must consider, "How does this fit with the cultural perspectives of the people buried there?"

Comment: Are there other areas in Minneapolis that would benefit from Great River Greening's native restoration efforts?

Comment: The land where people are buried are sacred to Native Americans. Consider corner lots and other areas that need to be beautified.

Chair Fazeli thanked the presenter and expressed CEACs priority for equity as well as climate mitigation when considering the Commission's position on projects and policies. No further action was taken.

Unfinished Business

Updates and Announcements from Commissioners and staff

The fair share science based targets will be included in the Climate Action and Equity Plan for adoption when the plan is adopted. Minneapolis is collaborating with over 20 MN cities is pursuing [Better Buildings for MN](#), which is state legislation to update the building code so that it will provide a pathway to net zero energy for all buildings 50,000 SF and larger by 2036. Applications are being taken now for the [Green Cost Share program](#).

Commissioner Dhennin highlighted CM Goodman's promotion of the MN Pollution Control Agency [rebates](#) for electric lawn equipment. The City of Minneapolis Green Cost Share [innovative air pollution reduction](#) program also offers grants to businesses to electrify a large fleet of lawn equipment.

East Phillips Neighborhood plans to meet on Sun May 23 to discuss next steps for the Hiawatha Public Works planned project. Commissioner Erin Niehoff plans to draft a letter to Mayor Frey regarding his position on the Public Works project at Hiawatha.

Commissioner Niehoff read a letter from Friends of Hiawatha on modifying storm water sewer management to reduce trash pollution and protect water quality. The topic is planned to be heard by City Council at a meeting on Jun 9.

A motion was made and seconded for Commissioners Niehoff, Henderson and Fazeli to draft a letter to City Council in support of efforts to improve storm sewer systems to limit the amount of trash, waste, and toxins entering waterways. The motion passed unanimously.

Possible Future CEAC Meeting Topics:

Climate Action and Equity Plan Steering Committee

ask Force opportunities Bikes, Scooters and Mobility Hubs: What's ahead for 2022? – Looking at a later CEAC meeting after final negotiations for the bikes and scooters contract is complete.

Carbon Free Zones and fossil gas free development Sustainable building policies for City
Financed economic development

How to reduce plastic in the community?

How do we reduce emissions from the HERC?

Invitation to elected officials to present on their priorities. Invitation to meet with other Hennepin County peer commissions who expressed interest in meeting and collaborating.

Commissioner Niehoff expressed a desire to eventually meet elsewhere in the community for monthly meetings again when it makes sense.

Announcements

Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 7:00. The motion passed unanimously.

Next Community Environmental Advisory Commission meeting : Jun 21, 2022

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